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# healthy heart

A service of Kadlec Regional Medical Center—Tri-Cities

HEALTH NEWS AND INFORMATION

## step right up

“OF ALL EXERCISES, WALKING IS the best.”

Founding father Thomas Jefferson wrote that in 1786, long before research would support his thinking that walking can make a difference in a person's health.

Today there is a wealth of research showing that taking a brisk walk for 30 minutes a day can reduce heart disease risk, possibly by as much as 30 to 40 percent. Walking has also been shown to provide major reductions in diabetes risk, decreases in high blood pressure and increases in bone density.

Just ask Lourdes Nelson, of Kennewick. She started walking to improve her health.

“I had serious allergies and asthma, and when I moved to the Tri-Cities it got even worse,” she says. “I wanted to do something about it, so I started walking. The more I walked, the better it got.”

Nelson walks four to five days a week as a part of the Healthy Ages Mall Walking program, which is co-sponsored by Kadlec Regional Medical Center and Columbia Center Mall. Participants can walk inside the mall before it opens each morning. Each lap around the mall, including all the nooks and crannies, is one mile. In 2009, Nelson

hit the 5,000-mile mark.

“My goal is to reach 10,000 or more,” she says.

Fewer than 50 percent of American adults get enough exercise to gain any health or fitness benefits from physical activity. Heart disease is this country's No. 1 killer, but with as little as 30 minutes of exercise each day, a person can reduce his or her risk.

“Regular walking three to five times a week has been shown to be very helpful in maintaining and improving cardiovascular status,” says Tri-Cities cardiologist S. K. Wadhwa, MD. “It also helps general well-being and musculoskeletal conditions.”

### Get moving

Anyone is welcome to join the mall walkers—just stop by! Mall doors open for walkers at 7:30 a.m. every day.

To find out more about Kadlec's Healthy Ages Mall Walking program, stop by the table set up in front of Cinnabon Monday through Thursday from 7:30 to 9 a.m.

TO BETTER  
HEALTH



Join the Healthy Ages program. Call 509-942-2700 or sign up at [www.kadlecmed.org/programs/healthy\\_ages.html](http://www.kadlecmed.org/programs/healthy_ages.html).

# HEALTH facts

## GAIN WITH THIS GRAIN

Barley is a great addition to the pantry. It has both soluble and insoluble fiber, and it can help promote regularity, maintain blood sugar levels and lower the risk of heart disease. Cook up a batch of pearl barley, and add it to prepared soups, stews, casseroles and salads.

—American Dietetic Association

## A SONG TO SCRUB BY

To keep germs from spreading, regular handwashing is crucial. Apply soap, rub hands together vigorously and scrub all surfaces. It takes about 20 seconds for the soap and scrubbing action to dislodge and remove stubborn germs. Need a timer? Imagine singing “Happy Birthday” twice through.

—Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



## healthyheart

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**Rand Wortman**  
President and CEO,  
Kadlec Health System

**Lane Savitch**  
President,  
Kadlec Regional  
Medical Center

**Nikki Ostergaard**  
Marketing Specialist,  
Kadlec Health System

**Jim Hall**  
Community Relations  
Director,  
Kadlec Health System

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# monitor

## BLOOD PRESSURE AT HOME

DO TRY THIS AT HOME—TAKING your blood pressure, that is.

Blood pressure readings vary throughout the day. Your pressure can be temporarily influenced by your mood, the medicine you take, what you've just eaten—and even where you are. For instance, some people's blood pressure momentarily rises at a doctor's office. This occurrence is so common, in fact, that there's even a name for it: white-coat high blood pressure.

These fluctuations help explain why your doctor may ask you to monitor your blood pressure at home, especially if you have high blood pressure. Home monitoring can help your doctor get a big-picture look at your blood pressure

over time and make sure your treatment is working. This knowledge is important because uncontrolled high blood pressure can put you at risk for a heart attack or stroke.

### Tips for do-it-yourselfers

The American Heart Association (AHA) suggests that you buy an automatic monitor with a cuff for your upper arm. Ask your health care provider for more specific advice about the model to buy.

Once you've bought one, take it to your health care provider's office to make sure the readings are accurate. Also ask your provider to show you how to use it correctly.

Finally, for the most accurate readings, the AHA recommends that you: ■ Don't exercise or drink caffeinated beverages within 30 minutes of checking your pressure. ■ Check your pressure at the same time every day, and take two or three readings one minute apart.

You should check your pressure at the same time every day.

# YOUR GUIDE TO TAKING digoxin

NATURE PROVIDES US WITH SOME POWERFUL medications. One example is digitalis, a drug derived from the foxglove plant. It has been used for hundreds of years to treat heart ailments. Today, the most commonly prescribed form of digitalis is digoxin.

Digoxin is used to treat heart failure, irregular heart-beat and sometimes angina (heart pain). It can help:

- Increase how strongly the heart contracts.
- Reduce the size of the heart.
- Slow the heart's rate of beating.
- Rid the body of extra fluid.

## Handle with care

Digoxin needs to be managed carefully to be effective and to avoid side effects. For instance, you will need regular blood tests to be sure you don't have too much digoxin in your body, which can cause: ■ Loss of appetite. ■ Headaches. ■ Dizziness or light-headedness. ■ Blurred or yellowed vision.

Talk to your health care provider if any of these symptoms are severe or don't go away. You should also let your provider know right away if you have any of the following while taking digoxin: ■ Nausea and vomiting. ■ Diarrhea. ■ Swelling in your hands or feet. ■ Unusual weight gain. ■ Trouble breathing. ■ Unusual tiredness or weakness. ■ A slow or irregular heartbeat or palpitations.

You'll need to keep taking digoxin even if you're feeling OK. Never stop taking it without your health care provider's approval.

If you miss a dose, it's fine to go ahead and take it if you remember within 12 hours, advises the American Academy of Family Physicians. Otherwise, skip it and just take the next scheduled dose—don't double up.

Be sure to tell your health care provider about all medications—including herbal supplements, over-the-counter drugs and vitamins—that you take. A variety of things, from laxatives to antacids, can interact with digoxin and cause problems.

It is also best to take this medication on an empty stomach, since many food items—including high-fiber foods—can interfere with digoxin's effectiveness.

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## The power of potassium

Digoxin helps the heart, in part, by getting rid of excess fluid in the body. But the water loss can cause low potassium levels—and that can be a problem.

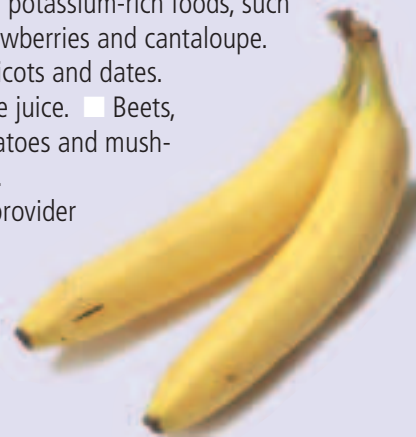
Your body needs potassium for proper growth and maintenance. According to the American Heart Association, potassium helps maintain the balance of water between your cells and body fluids, and it helps the heart and nervous system function normally.

So if you are taking digoxin, it pays to be vigilant about getting enough potassium. One caveat: Too much potassium can be a problem as well, so be sure to talk to your health care provider about the amount of potassium you need.

If your health care provider says you should get more potassium, reach for potassium-rich foods, such as:

- Bananas, strawberries and cantaloupe.
- Dried prunes, apricots and dates.
- Tomato and prune juice.
- Beets, peas, potatoes, tomatoes and mushrooms.
- Molasses.

Your health care provider may also recommend a potassium supplement.



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888 Swift Blvd.  
Richland, WA 99352

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# snacking

## THE RIGHT WAY



THERE'S NOTHING WRONG with having a little snack between meals—as long as you make healthy choices and limit your portions.

Snacking can be an important part of a healthy diet. And eating small, frequent snacks is a good way to help you control your weight and feel energized all day.

The keys to healthy snacking are the foods you choose, the size of your portions, how frequently you snack and the total amount of calories you eat.

Snacking can be an important part of a healthy diet.

One way to control portion size is to limit the size of your morning snack to half the size of your breakfast. Your afternoon snack should be no more than half the size of your lunch.

Good choices for healthy snacks include: ■ Apples, bananas, raisins, and other fresh fruits. ■ Carrot and celery sticks, radishes, cauliflower, and other fresh vegetables. ■ Plain unsalted popcorn and pretzels. ■ Breadsticks and whole-grain toast. ■ Unsalted sunflower seeds, rice cakes, almonds, walnuts and other nuts. ■ Low-fat or fat-free yogurt, cheese and milk. ■ Tomato or vegetable soup. ■ A thin slice of angel food cake.

Sources: American Dietetic Association; American Heart Association



## HEALTHY. recipe

### Savory fresh apricot bites

You can serve these as a snack, appetizer or dessert.

#### Ingredients

- 4 ounces fat-free cream cheese, softened
- 12 fresh apricots, halved
- ¼ cup pistachios, finely chopped

#### Directions

- Stir cream cheese until smooth; pipe or spoon into apricot halves.
  - Sprinkle tops with pistachios.
- Makes 12 servings.

#### Nutrition information (per serving)

Calories 40	Calories from fat 15
Percent Daily Value*	
Total fat 2g	2%
Saturated fat 0g	0%
Trans fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 50mg	2%
Total carbohydrates 5g	2%
Dietary fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 3g	
Protein 2g	
Vitamin A	15%
Vitamin C	6%
Calcium	2%
Iron	2%

\*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Recipe from [www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov) and the California Fresh Apricot Council.